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J. J. C. J.*

- (a) a needle guard slidably mounted on the proximal end of said needle, said needle guard having a movable needle trap that is transitional between a first retracted configuration and a second operative configuration wherein said needle trap traps said sharpened distal end of said needle;
- (b) a limiting apparatus formed upon said needle guard and engageable with said change in axis formed upon said needle for limiting the distance said needle guard slidably travels upon said needle, said limiting apparatus being operative to engage with said change in axis coincident with when said needle trap transitions from said first retracted configuration to said second operative configuration.

15. (NEW) The needle protective device of Claim 14 wherein said change of axis of said needle comprises a bend formed upon the length of said needle.

16. (NEW) The needle protective device of Claim 14 wherein said movable needle trap is biased against said needle when said needle trap assumes said first retracted configuration.

17. (NEW) The needle protective device of Claim 14 wherein said needle is selected from the group consisting of an epidural needle, a blood collection needle, a biopsy needle, a Seldinger needle, a Huber needle, an aspirating needle, and a solid stylet.

18. (NEW) The needle protective device of Claim 14 wherein said needle trap transitions from said first retracted configuration to said second operative configuration, said limiting apparatus subsequently engages with said change in axis.

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19. (NEW) The needle protective device of Claim 14 wherein said limiting apparatus is operative to engage with said change in axis, said needle trap subsequently transitions from said first retracted configuration to said second operative configuration.

20. (NEW) The needle protector device of Claim 14 wherein said change in axis defines a change in profile, said change in profile being engageable with said limiting apparatus.

21. (NEW) The needle protector device of Claim 20 wherein said change in profile defined by said change in axis comprises at least one outwardly-bulging sidewall portion.

22. (NEW) The needle protector device of Claim 20 wherein said change in profile defined by said change in axis defines a recessed change in profile.

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